

RESOURCES

New Jersey State Archives
Po Box 307, 225 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6260

Special Collections & University Archives
Alexander Library, Rutgers University
169 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08903
732-932-7510

New Jersey Historical Society
52 Park Place, Newark, NJ 07102
973-596-8500

www.ancestry.com
www.familysearch.org

North Jersey Area
Joint Free Public Library
of Morristown and Morris Township
1 Miller Road, Morristown, NJ 07960
973-538-6161

East Jersey Area
Monmouth County
Historical Association
70 Court Street, Freehold, NJ 07728
908-782-1091

South Jersey Area
Gloucester County Historical Society
17 Hunter Street, Woodbury, NJ 08096
856-845-4771

West Jersey Area
Hunterdon County Historical Society
114 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822
908-782-1091

Middlesex County Office of Culture & Heritage
1050 River Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854
732-745-3030 (Voice), 732-745-3888 (TTY), culturalandheritage@co.middlesex.nj.us
Cornelius Low House Hours: Tuesday - Friday & Sunday, 1-4pm / School and Group Tours: Call 732-745-3030

Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
Ronald G. Rios, *Freeholder Director*
Carol Bellante, *Freeholder Deputy Director*
Kenneth Armwood, *Liaison to the Office*
Charles Kenny, Shanti Narra, Charles E. Tomaro, Blanquita B. Valenti
John A. Pulomena, *County Administrator*
Kathaleen R. Shaw, *Department Head, Business Development & Education*
Mark Nonestied, *Division Head, Historic Sites and History Services*

Funding
Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
New Jersey Historical Commission, a Division of the Department of State

Lenders
Suffolk County Historical Society and Jersey Blue Chapter DAR, Buccleuch Mansion

WWW.MIDDLESEXCOUNTYNJ.GOV

Text CULTURE TO 56512



A Revolutionary Legacy THE CORNELIUS LOW HOUSE 275

Cornelius Low House/Middlesex County Museum
1225 River Road • Piscataway, NJ 08854



Immerse yourself in the history of the Low family and their lives in Colonial America. Explore Cornelius Low's "House on the Mountain", a beautiful Georgian structure celebrating a 275 year legacy.

WWW.MIDDLESEXCOUNTYNJ.GOV

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE



275 years OF HISTORY, IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD!

While private homes, castles, museums and public buildings much older than 275 years are commonplace in Europe, it's a rarity to find one here in the United States, especially one in pristine condition. This is why we have chosen to celebrate the storied past of the Cornelius Low House, this elegant Georgian style home that has been so well maintained, and the family who first lived here.

A Revolutionary Legacy: The Cornelius Low House 275 focuses on the home and the family of its namesake, Cornelius Low. Low, a prosperous merchant, and his wife, Johanna, had eleven children, five of whom lived well into adulthood. One was shot and killed when he was 19; one got sick and died when she was 20. The others died at very young ages due to various illnesses.

Through genealogical research, the remaining lines are traced and tell a story of how a family took sides during the American Revolution, and how those decisions were made. Cornelius Low was a Loyalist during the war, but his sons and daughters spilt their allegiances. Some went back to England, while others stayed in the fledgling United States of America and became prominent businessmen and formers of the new nation. They were compatriots, neighbors and friends of some of our Founding Fathers. The familial lines intertwine with many of the more prominent names from history here in central New Jersey and the surrounding areas.

The text in this booklet highlights the research done for the exhibit, and suggests ways to find out more about your own family. The booklet even provides a basic family tree for you to fill in while performing your own genealogical studies.

It's important for us to know where we come from. The best part is we never know what we will find in our family's past. The Cornelius Low House has been publicly owned and operated as a museum since 1979 when it was purchased from the last of six owners of the home, Marianne Strong. We are still learning more and more about the original owners every day. The exhibit and this educational guide are but snapshots of 275 years of history, but they are a good starting point.

Ken Helsby
Museum Educator, Cornelius Low House



The genealogy of the Low family provides a glimpse of life before and during the American Revolution.

Cornelius Low was born on March 20/31 1699/1700 in New York City, to Cornelius Low and Margaret Van Bursum, who came to the colonies from the Netherlands in the mid-1600s. The family's roots can be traced to Kingston, New York, with family members eventually settling in New York City and Newark, New Jersey. Low and his sons owned several properties and businesses throughout New York City.

In 1729, Cornelius the junior married Johanna Gouverneur (1704-1763), daughter of Isaac Gouverneur. Johanna was related to the very influential Gouverneur and Morris families of New York and New Jersey, and through her family connections, Low and his family were linked to many influential and well-known people in Colonial America.

Two hundred seventy-five years ago, Cornelius Low wrote the following entry in the family Bible:

On the 8/19 October 1741, on Thursday morning, at about half an hour before ten o'clock was born our sixth son in my new house on the Mountain, at the Raritan Landing, and was baptized by Pastor Haeghoort at his house on Second River, on the 24 January 1741/2; and was called William. Godfather brother Samuel Gouverneur, Grandmother Johanna Van Courtlandt.

This entry is the first-known mention of Low's new house overlooking Raritan Landing, and that is why the house is dated to 1741. Over the years, Low recorded the family births and deaths in his Bible. Among them, sadly, is William's death on 1/12 December 1749

He and his wife had 11 children; unfortunately many of their children did not survive into adulthood. Listed below are the names of his children:

Isaac Low	1731-1791	Sarah Low	1733-1823
Margaretta Low	1734-1755	Cornelius Low	1736-1769
Samuel Low	1737-1756	Nicholas Low	1739-1826
William Low	1741-1749	John Low	1743-1743
Johanna Low	1744-1751	Gertrude Low	1746-1747
Gertrude Low	1748-1836		

You may have noticed two daughters were named Gertrude. It was common in many cultures to reuse the name of a child who passed away. Sometimes three or four children were given the same name. Johanna Low died in 1768, and Low remained in the house until his death in April 1777. His widowed daughter-in-law Catherine Hude Low lived in the house with her family until Low's estate was settled after the war, in 1783.

Isaac, Nicholas, Sarah and Gertrude all lived long lives and were directly or indirectly involved in the politics and turmoil associated with the American Revolution. The stories of Isaac and Nicholas are fascinating and are examined in detail in the exhibit.



The following information is taken from *Fundamentals of Family History for Teachers* prepared by Joseph R. Klett, NJ State Archives/Genealogical Society of NJ, March 2002. Whether you are a teacher or student, adult or child, this guide is meant to help you understand why our genealogy is important, what skills we can learn and what kind of information we can find as we delve into our pasts.

Why study family and personal history in a school setting?

To encourage learning about one's self and thinking about why we are who we are, and why we do what we do.

RELATED QUESTIONS:

- Why do we live where we live?
- What are our religious beliefs, and how did we come to learn about them?
- How do our ancestors' religious experiences affect us today?
- Why do we speak the language(s) that we speak?
- Why do we have the occupations that we have?
- What do our names mean?
- How do our ethnic origins affect our lives in 21st-century America?
- How do our families' medical histories affect us today?

To foster analytical and critical thinking, and to develop research skills.

RELATED QUESTIONS:

- What is the difference between a primary and a secondary source?
- What kind of information is recorded by governments, and why?
- How have changes in government authority affected the recording of information about people over the centuries?
- What kind of information is recorded by religious organizations, and why?
- How have changes in religious authority affected the recording of information about people over the centuries?
- What kind of written and photographic information is kept by families and individuals, and why?
- What kind of information is communicated through oral tradition, and why?
- What kinds of sources are the most reliable for vital genealogical facts?
- What kinds are most reliable for documenting stories, events, feelings, experiences and the reason for making decisions?
- Are primary sources always correct?
- Where can we find information, and how do information sources differ in their missions? How does this relate to the quality and accessibility of information available from:
 - a) Family Members (both immediate and distant)?
 - b) Religious and Social Organizations?
 - c) Archives? Libraries? Museums?
 - d) Local Government Agencies?
 - e) State and Federal Government Agencies?
 - f) The Internet?



To encourage the study and understanding of local, regional, national and world history and how it relates to us personally and to our families.

RELATED QUESTIONS:

- How have local events and trends affected our lives and our families' lives?
- How have state and federal laws and policies affected our lives and our families' lives?
- How have wars affected us and our families?
- How have natural disasters affected us and our families?
- How have our families tried to change or succeeded in changing society?
- What do our names mean?
- How have religion and cultural philosophies affected us and our families?
- How have foreign governments, religious and political persecution, or racial and ethnic discrimination affected our families?
- How have immigration policies and migration trends affected us and our families?
- How have regional and national economy and material wealth affected us, and the decisions we make?

To gain a better understanding of how society and family life have:

- 1) *changed or stayed the same over time*
- 2) *differ from culture to culture.*

RELATED QUESTIONS:

- How have gender roles in family life changed over time?
- How do people make a living now compared to a decade ago? Compared to a century ago? Compared to a thousand years ago?
- How have societal and family expectations for different age groups changed over time?
- How has family size and structure changed over time in different cultures and populations?
- How has the need or desire to live near relatives, or near where ancestors lived, changed over time?
- What kinds of lifestyle changes did our families experience after coming to America? How did this compare to expectations?
- How have trends in family business or passed-down trades changed over time? How have family relationships changed over time with regard to:
 - a) Siblings?
 - b) Parents and grandparents?
 - c) Aunts, uncles and first cousins?
 - d) Great-aunts, great-uncles and their families?
 - e) In-laws?
 - f) Tribes, clans and villages?





BUILD YOUR *Family Tree*

After preparing yourself, with the why's and how's of doing genealogy, it's time to put it into practice. If you haven't already begun the process for your own family, start small. See how far back you can go just by talking to your family members.

Teachers, this is a wonderful exercise to get your students to talk to their parents, grandparents and other family members about their memories and experiences. Have them use the Family Tree on the next page, or similar ones that can be found easily on the Internet, to chart their roots. Some of them may be able to go back further than their great-great grandparents, depending on their families and what has already been done for them. Challenge your students to explore as far back as they can and report back to the class with their findings.

You never know what will be discovered and cherished, as evidenced by the following anecdote:

When I first began working at the Low House in 1991, the exhibit was about World War II. As part of pre-visit correspondence with the teachers scheduling visits for their classes, the students were asked to fill out a simple index card after interviewing someone they knew that was involved in the war somehow; grandparent, uncle, etc. This was a way to get them to talk to their relatives and hopefully learn something along the way. I received a wonderful letter back from a mother of a young boy who had called Puerto Rico to talk with his grandfather about his experience in World War II. She wrote in part:

... he [her father] was very silent at first. Then with ever increasing excitement and animation, he spoke ... For over an hour my father and my son spoke about this very real event, so special in both their lives ... Nothing has animated my dear Dad so much as this experience of sharing his war time recollections with his grandson ... No one has ever asked me about this," he said. And then he cried and so did I ...

So like I said, you never know. Enjoy it and make the best out of it.

*The resources at the end of this booklet
may help you on your journey into your family's past.
Good Luck!*

